



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

October 7, 2014

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To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
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From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

REPORT BACK ON THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF A SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS MONUMENT PLAN ON PUBLIC SAFETY, FLOOD CONTROL AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (ITEM NO. 42-A, AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2014)

This memorandum is to report back to the Board on the potential impacts of a San Gabriel Mountains Monument Plan on public safety, flood control and emergency services and share those findings with the federal government, municipalities and other interested stakeholders as instructed by the Board on September 2, 2014.

The Chief Executive Office (CEO) contacted the Sheriff, Fire, Departments of Public Works, Regional Planning, and Parks and Recreation to request their review and analysis of the proposed San Gabriel Mountains National Monument plan. A summary of the Department's specific concerns are as follows:

Los Angeles County Fire Department

It is essential that any designation change of the Angeles National Forest lands not preclude any of the following activities currently performed by the Department:

- Department brush clearance requirements will be enforced on national monument lands;
- Department suppression tactics (i.e. night-flying helicopter operations, use of Superscooper aircraft, and use of heavy equipment and bulldozers) will be allowed on national monument lands;
- Department policies related to prevention, water and access, firesafe building requirements, and annual brush clearance inspections will be enforced on national monument lands.

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In addition, the Department has recommended some specific language for inclusion in the Monument Management Plan, if the proposal is adopted. This information will be shared with Representative Judy Chu and the appropriate federal agencies and legislators as follows:

FIRE MANAGEMENT AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

- 1) Revision and Development of Local Fire Management Plans – As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall amend the local fire management plans that apply to the land designated as a National Monument *within the Angeles National Forest and the San Bernardino National Forest, to identify appropriate local officials to take such actions within the Monument as are necessary for fire prevention and watershed protection, consistent with the best management practices for fire pre-suppression and fire suppression measures and techniques.*
 - a) *During times of real or inherent wildfire threat to communities, the Local Fire Management Plan shall authorize the Forest Supervisor, or designee, to use any and all methods of modern fire suppression, including mechanized heavy equipment and installation of fire breaks (roads), and other methods as necessary to cease progression of a wildfire.*

Department of Public Works

The following essential elements are recommended by the Department of Public Works due to its extensive activities in flood control, water conservation, water supply sediment control and the operation of eight dams, and over 100 miles of roads and bridges within the proposed designation area:

- Recognition of the importance of the area's water resources to one of the world's largest urban centers;
- Preservation of local agency discretion to manage their facilities under existing agreements, including flood control facilities and paved and unpaved access roads;
- Assurances that restrictions are upheld only insofar as they do not jeopardize the safety and well-being of downstream communities;
- Collaboration between managing federal agencies and local governments in the drafting and enforcement of the management plan; and
- Language aligned with Section 6 of H.R. 4858, confirming that there would be no impact on water resource facilities or their operations.

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The Departments of Regional Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Sheriff report no impact to their operations in the proposed designation area should a National Monument Proclamation be approved.

CEO and various Departmental staff continue to work closely with Representative Chu's office and other stakeholders as this proposal is considered. We understand that it is not customary for the Executive Branch to circulate a draft of the proclamation to the public for review and comment. As such, Departments are unable to determine definitively the potential impact of a National Monument designation on County operations prior to the issuance of the proclamation. However, the Monument proposal, if approved, would require the development of a Monument Management Plan that impacted agencies would be allowed to provide input. In addition, the concerns noted above have been transmitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture on September 26, 2014 in the attached correspondence from several members of Congress. These concerns were also provided to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) by CEO Washington D.C. legislative staff on September 30, 2014. It appears from another recent Presidential Proclamation to expand the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument created in 2009, that important exemptions were included similar to those sought for the San Gabriel Mountains designation. This document illustrates that there is ample precedent for allowing the activities that the County performs in the proposed National Monument area to continue as is without any added restrictions.

The CEO will continue to keep you apprised of any future developments on this issue. Please contact Rita L. Robinson at (213) 893-2477, or rrobinson@ceo.lacounty.gov if you have any questions.

WTF:RLR:acn

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Sheriff
Fire
Parks and Recreation
Public Works
Regional Planning

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 26, 2014

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

Thank you for considering our request for an outcomes-based approach to establishing a San Gabriel Mountains national monument. We sent a letter on August 19 urging you to direct the U.S. Forest Service to prioritize critical goals for protecting the many values present in the mountains, and enhancing the experience of resident and visitors to the area. In particular, we underscored that the U.S. Forest Service must be prepared to make tangible improvements to persistent challenges, such as graffiti and trash, and engage urban communities and stakeholders in a robust manner.

As a result, Undersecretary Robert Bonnie has expressed a strong commitment to realizing these goals. In addition, the U.S. Forest Service has been working with communities and stakeholders in the San Gabriel Valley and surrounding areas to address outstanding concerns and gather public input. We are informed that meetings have taken place with homeowners associations, off-highway vehicle groups, several meetings with representatives from the water community and Southern California Edison, and meetings with elected officials from the local cities and counties. We appreciate these efforts and encourage the U.S. Forest Service to continue its outreach throughout the region.

We also urge the U.S. Forest Service to carefully consider the concerns of the wide range of stakeholders that we represent, and use language from the San Gabriel National Recreation Area Act (H.R. 4858) as a blueprint for monument proclamation language. This language was carefully coordinated to protect and preserve rights, land uses, and other critical priorities for all stakeholders. These same assurances are needed in a national monument proclamation to strike a balance between conservation and access. Specifically, we would like to request that proclamation language include protections for – but not limited to – the following:

- Protection of public and private water rights, infrastructure, facilities, and operations.
- Protection of agreements with any public agencies' rights, infrastructure, facilities, and operations.
- Protection of fire management capabilities, infrastructure, facilities, and operations.
- Protection of private property rights and land use agreements, permits, regulations, plans, and laws, especially for homeowners and businesses in the San Gabriel Mountains.

- Protection of agreements with cabin owners in the San Gabriel Mountains, such as recreational residence programs.
- Protection of utilities' rights of way.
- Protection of existing recreational opportunities, access, and future enhancements for off-highway vehicle use.
- Protection of existing recreational opportunities, access, and future enhancements for bicycle use, rock climbing, winter recreation including skiing and snowboarding, hang gliding and paragliding, hiking, equestrian activities, camping, hunting, fishing, and all other forms of recreation available and feasible in the San Gabriel Mountains.
- Protection of sanitation rights, infrastructure, facilities, and operations.
- Protection of tribal rights, access agreements, artifacts, and cultural heritage.
- Establishment of Public Advisory Council with robust local representation.

We believe these protections help to advance the goals we previously shared with you, which should be at the heart of any potential designation for the San Gabriel Mountains. Therefore, again, we urge that you take these vital protections, and others that you hear from the affected communities, into careful consideration, and include them as appropriate in a monument designation. While we must act quickly to protect all the invaluable resources in the San Gabriel Mountains, these protections will help give the public the opportunity to experience these mountains in the most sustainable, empowering, and fulfilling way.

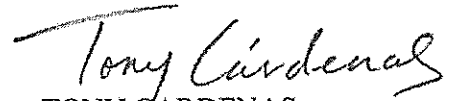
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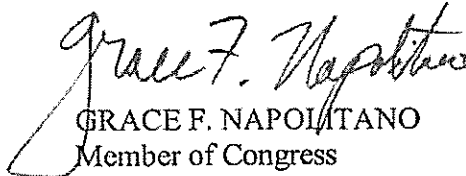
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